



## Introduction to Assessment --

### Assessment Definitions:

**Formative Assessment**—assessments that provide information to students and teachers used to improve teaching and learning. This includes all those activities undertaken by teachers and students that provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. (Black & William 1998)

These assessments may occur both prior to instruction (pre-assessment) or continuously during instruction.

**Summative Assessment**—cumulative assessments, usually occurring at the end of a unit or topic that intend to capture what a student has learned and judge performance against specific standards.

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**Alternative Assessment**—assessments that are different in form from traditional paper-and-pencil assessments. These may incorporate a range of assessment methods to supplement standardized tests.

**Performance Assessment**—assessments that allow students to demonstrate their understandings and skills as they perform a certain activity. Students are evaluated on the quality of their ability to perform specific tasks and the products they create in the process.

**Portfolio Assessment**—a purposeful and representative collection of student work that conveys a story of progress, achievement and/or effort. Students are involved in selecting their pieces of work, and their collection includes self-reflections of what understandings the piece of work demonstrates.

**Embedded Assessment**—assessments that occur as part of regular teaching and curricular activities.

**Authentic Assessment**—assessments that require students to perform complex tasks representative of activities actually done in out-of-school settings.